(b) if so, whether the claims of the 'Beej Bachao Andolan' in the Garhwal region have been verified: and

(c) if so, the steps, if any, taken by Government to popularise traditional and high-yielding varieties which would also reduce dependence on chemical pesticides and fertilizers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S. KRISHA KUMAR). (a) to (c) The local varieties normally have low yielding potential and adptod to low yielding environments. Under high fertility situations their yield potential is low due to lodging and insert pest and disease damage. In some of the cases such as basmati rice, the local types have been found extremely desirable due to their superior grain quality features. Seeds of traditional Basmati type rice varieties are being multiplied on large scale and made available to the farmers. In other cases some of the local type possess specific feature such as resistance to diseases and insect pests and these are used in hybridization programmes to transfer the genes controlling these features to high yielding background to develop superior improved varieties. Such disease and pest resistant improved varieties help in reducing the dependence on chemical pesticides and fungicides.

Collection, evaluation, catalouging and conservation of local germplasm is an continuous process which is carried-out in all important crops and main responsibility lies with National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources. Local materials identified as promising for different features are used in the varietal improvement programmes.

Agreement between India and Israel for Agricultural Development

6571. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the agreements in force between Government of India and Israel for various agricultural programmes;

(b) the details thereof; and

(c) whether State Governments have been involved in these agricultural programmes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) and (b) An agreement for cooperation in the field of agriculture between the Governments of India and Israel was signed in December 1993 which interalia provides for cooperation in agricultural science and technology including research, education, extension and training, development projects and joint ventures between companies or institutions of the two countries through collaborative activities and exchanges in the areas of water and soil management, arid and semi arid crop production, plant and animal sciences, veterinary science, farm mechanisation and technology, fruit and vegetable production, post harvest and processing technology, plant protection and control, agribusiness, agro forestry etc. Cooperation under the agreement is to be carried out through Biennial Work Plan.

(c) The State Governments would be consulted, whenever required, during the implementation of the Work Plan.

Revitalisation of cooperative sector

6572. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to revitalise the cooperative sector;

(b) whether there is a need to revamp the National Cooperative Development Corporation;

(c) if so, the steps taken in that direction; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) The Central Government have recently initiated a